

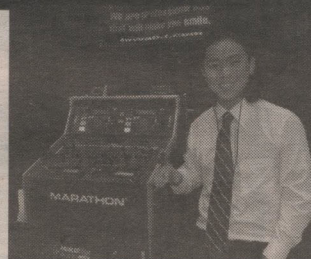
Choir crams
on bus, tours
DC and NYC

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Review of
weekend
Dordt Dances

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Professors
leave Dordt
for new gigs

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Students expand the horizons of Justice Week

Bridget Smith
Staff Writer

Dordt's campus might look a little different next week as students seek to raise awareness and get involved in various local and global issues during Dordt's Justice Awareness Week.

The Justice Matters Club will be hosting events focusing on a range of topics including food, international affairs, AIDS awareness, technology and recycling.

"In past years, [Justice Week] has taken different forms, such as focusing just on poverty or just on environmental issues," said Emily Wierenga, member of the Justice Matters Club. "[With] Justice Awareness Week this year, there is a different focus each day," she said.

Wierenga says she is excited about this year's Justice Week because it will incorporate such a wide variety of issues.

Numerous students have stepped forward in the Justice Matters club with a particular issue they are passionate about and would like to address.

Micah Schuurman is heading up "Food Day," which will focus on responsible consumption and buying locally. Agricultural Professor Ron Voss will be giving a lecture about the relationship between food and the environment.

Schuurman has also obtained cookbooks for students to purchase at reduced cost. This resource will allow students to make conscious choices in eating and will provide information on how to truly eat fresh.

"Hopefully, we will have samples available to taste [...] from the cookbooks to see that being stewardly is easy and tasty," Schuurman said.

AIDS awareness day will involve a "breaking bread" event to provide students with the opportunity to share a bread/porridge meal designed to reflect a typical meal in a refugee camp. Students will receive profiles of children

continued on page 2

Lights Out

Dordt participates in global Earth Hour

Kyla Jameson
Staff Writer

Sixty minutes. Two episodes of "The Simpsons." A typical church service.

One hour – that's all it took last Saturday for Dordt students to realize the impact of global warming.

Earth Hour, which began in Sydney, Australia, last year, is a campaign encouraging people to turn off their lights and non-essential electrical appliances for one hour.

The Creation Care Club brought this event to Dordt's campus because of the reality of global warming.

"I think it's a great way to raise awareness of global warming," said junior Jill Bratt.

The event is now global: 293,337 people signed up this year. As the Earth Hour website explains, one hour of reducing energy is only the start of an effort against global warming.

"If the greenhouse reduction achieved in the Sydney CBD during Earth Hour was sustained for a year, it would be equivalent to taking 48,616 cars off the road for a year," it says.

This year's Earth Hour is over, but the problem still exists. Sign-up for 2009 at www.earthhour.org.

Zylstra denies Altena appeal

Bridget Smith
Staff Writer

Sandi Altena, former Director of Residential Life, said she received no warning of the decision to dismiss her from her position last month.

When students received news of the decision, they expressed a myriad of emotions to board members and to each other – chief among those emotions was confusion.

Altena said she, too, experienced a great deal of confusion and decided immediately to appeal the dismissal. "I met with Zylstra

to discuss my case and to try to understand why this was happening," Altena explained. "I expressed my disappointment and confusion.

"I also submitted a document outlining my recent work history, etc. The president considered it for 10 days and then met with me to discuss his decision."

President Zylstra decided to uphold the decision announced by Bethany Schuttinga, vice president of Student Services, Altena said.

Sue Droog, Human Resources, declined to comment on whether a

board met to make the initial decision regarding Altena's dismissal.

Droog cited confidentiality and respect for personnel information as the reasons college administrators have declined comment on the situation.

Schuttinga also declined an interview, citing privacy of personnel information both before and after an appeal process.

"I don't understand at all," Altena said. "Every indication I had while working at Dordt, was that I was very much a part of 2008-09 and beyond. I

also have no history of disciplinary action or poor performance, etc.

"It doesn't make sense to me at all."

Altena is unsure about her plans for the future and a career beyond Dordt College.

"I hope the Lord lets me work with people," she said. "I pray for those kinds of opportunities."

"I hope I get a job where I can love and empower others and teach and help those who can't help themselves. I hope I find a community where I feel that I belong. I hope I can minister wherever I land."

the
dordt
diamond

Track competes in Florida

Jessi Rieken
Staff Writer

Over spring break the Dordt track athletes hopped on a charter bus and embarked on their long, 27-hour journey to Florida for the Disney Wide World of Sports Complex track meet.

The team left Sunday, March 16 and came back on Easter Sunday, March 23.

The track meet was held outdoors, with a wide variety of competitors including people training for the Olympics.

College and high-school teams from all over the United States attended the meet.

Although the teams didn't keep scores this year, Jen Kempers guessed that Dordt placed high in a lot of the categories because of the number of competitors Dordt brought to the meet.



Track team at Florida's Disney track meet, where they saw Olympic gold medal contenders. Photo courtesy of Jen Kempers.

"I enjoyed spending my spring break at the meet," remarked Kempers, who walked away from the meet with two gold medals and a silver in the Open Eight,

Sprints and 4 by 8.

Matt Vander Ark said that a school record was set in the shuttle hurdle relay, an event he and teammate Tim Boonstra had never run

before.

"The Florida trip was a great team-bonding experience," said Vander Ark. "We had really thoughtful team devotions, we played a lot of sand volleyball, boogie and skim-boarded and really enjoyed swimming in the ocean."

When they were not competing the team spent their time on the beach trying to complete their "Bucket List" of digging a hole to China in the sand. Although they did not succeed, Kempers said that the hole was at least five to six feet deep.

Building sand castles, being attacked by jelly fish, drinking energy drinks and watching the coach dance to hip-hop songs were among the many things the team did besides track.

The next track meet will be the Augustana Invite on April 5 in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Faculty changes: three profs choose to leave

Jessica Assink
Staff Writer

Three Dordt professors have accepted teaching positions at other universities for the coming academic year.

Music professor Henry Duitman, economics professor Jonathan Warner and psychology professor Daniel Hitchcock will not be returning to Dordt in the fall.

Duitman, who has been a professor of music at Dordt for 23 years, recently accepted the position of director of orchestral activities at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich.

Duitman currently directs the Concert Band, Campus-Community Band and Chamber Orchestra, along with teaching classes. He has also been the music director and conductor of the Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra (NISO) for 22 years.

After many years at Dordt, Duitman recently began looking for a new position. "I needed something that would really give me a drive every day to improve myself," he said. "I would like to finish my career focusing much more on one top group, rather than four like I have, along with various courses that I teach."

Grand Valley, where Duitman will direct the symphony orchestra, enrolls approximately 23,000 students, with 24 full-time and 40 adjunct faculty in the music department. "I really need the challenges and the focus," said Duitman. "I'm leaving Dordt with wonderful feelings about the years I've spent here."

Duitman has regularly

taken his ensembles on tour, including the Chamber Orchestra and Jazz Band's tour to Colorado this January. "Every single tour and concert has been a highlight," he said, citing the Jubilee Tour in 2005 and the two European tours — the Chamber Orchestra's tour to the Netherlands in 1999 and the Concert Band's Eastern European tour in 2006 — as especially memorable experiences.

The music department is currently interviewing candidates for the vacant position to find someone to direct the two bands and the orchestra. Although NISO's members include many Dordt students, the orchestra also has a separate governing and fundraising board, so it is not yet known if the new professor will take on the directorship and conducting of NISO.

"With new blood I think the music department will be rejuvenated," Duitman said.

According to President Carl Zylstra, interest in Duitman's position has been high, and a new faculty member will be announced soon.

Warner, professor of economics, has taken a position at Quest University in Squamish, British Columbia, after nine years of teaching at Dordt.

Quest University, which is in its first year, is a new liberal arts and sciences university that encourages students to be "relentlessly curious." Warner will have various challenges and opportunities there: "I get to decide on the economics courses, what they look like and so on."

Although Quest is not a Christian university, it is "obviously faith friendly," said Warner. "It should present interesting different challenges. There are ways you can get across Christian principles without being explicit. Maybe you can do it even within the confines of a secular institution."

Warner, who is originally from England and has taught all over the world, decided it was time to move on from Dordt. "After this period of time here, I think it's probably time for a change. You get stale doing the same sorts of things," Warner said. "I have applied for jobs in the past but none of those doors opened up....It seemed like it was God's timing to move on to something different."

A recent highlight of Warner's Dordt career happened when "a student who's not taking a course comes along and asks if he can do the exam in the course."

Psychology professor Hitchcock, who has spent eight years at Dordt, will be teaching at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Penn., next year.

Hitchcock will be teaching the same sorts of classes that he has been teaching at Dordt, but he will be doing it at a college more closely affiliated with his own Presbyterian denomination. "My background is Presbyterian," Hitchcock said, "and so I've always kept my eye on some of the other reformed Christian colleges that have a Presbyterian background. Geneva College is one of them."

According to Hitchcock, "Dordt used to be the conservative alternative to

Calvin College," but that no longer seems to be the case. "The Christian Reformed Church as a denomination has been shifting a little more in the liberal direction," he said. "I'm more comfortable with the more traditional orthodox conservative position."

Hitchcock supported the founding of Dordt's Presbyterian Student Fellowship club and helped the club coordinate a van to take students to the Presbyterian church in Hospers, where he and his family attend. He and his wife enjoy having students over for lunch every couple of weeks. "I've learned a lot about reaching out to students outside of class," Hitchcock said.

Students expand the horizons of Justice Week

continued from page 1

impacted by AIDS and will take time during the meal to ask questions, reflect and pray for children affected by AIDS, Wierenga said.

Students have also ordered orange t-shirts from World Vision to raise AIDS awareness. The club hopes to have about five percent of the campus wearing the t-shirts to represent the percentage of children orphaned by AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

The club will also set up a tent that will be open throughout the week to provide information and the chance for students to participate in a letter drive for the Global Poverty Act.

Students do not realize the difference letter writing can make, Wierenga said. She explained that organizing the letter writing campaign has helped her realize the impact of each individual on the global community. Dordt's letters will be multiplied by churches and schools across the region that are sending similar letters to government officials.

Wierenga said the club's goal is not to change the political agenda of the college or to condemn students for not getting involved. Instead, the club hopes to raise awareness, allow students to ask questions and see different perspectives.

"What I like about Justice Awareness Week is just the different topics that it allows Dordt students to engage in," she said. Each topic will impact each student differently, Wierenga explained. Justice Week will hopefully provide students with the chance to see an issue they are passionate about and give them an opportunity to interact with both the local and global community.

She'll Say YES!



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Remember this in 30 years ...

Cheryl Hiemstra
Editor

How open does Dordt administration need to be with its students? Should we know why some faculty or staff are let go?

I've spoken with faculty, students and staff during several interviews over my four-year career as a reporter for the *Diamond*. These chats were not always under the happiest of circumstances. Each of these interviewees is guilty of the same journalistic "crime." When a journalist asks a question, the worst thing she can hear is: "I will only say this anonymously," or "off the record..." These kinds of answers make me wonder: Do we not trust each other enough to be open with each other? In keeping information from students, are they being wise and discreet... or deceptive and maybe just a little paranoid?

Most recently this issue came to light in the case of Sandi Altena. Students were kept out of the loop; all reasoning behind the decision was kept confidential. So, instead of hearing Dordt-approved information, students who cared followed other paths: Facebook and/or the rumor mill.

Our [student] voice will be more effective when we get *The Voice*.

While it's frustrating to have innocuous answers to tough questions concerning changes at Dordt, I also wonder why such a smart group of people would choose to exclude their smart students from having a stronger voice full of more information.

As students, even though we care about our community and our learning, how much do we need to know about our administration? Can we trust those who work with our beloved faculty and staff on a daily basis to make wise decisions? I have to wonder, too, why the case of Sandi Altena, or even Ron Rynders, caused so much turbulence. There are cases in which employees from the library staff or the computer services staff were fired in the middle of a semester. I haven't heard of any Facebook protests or e-mail chains popping up for those individuals.

If students claim they want rationale for every employee-related decision, shouldn't we care about all of them?

And therein is the heart of the issue: as students, we cannot see everything that goes on beyond the office doors of Dordt. As students who have only four years here, do we even have legitimate standing to critique these kinds of decisions? Say your six-year-old cousin critiqued your driving skills - you wouldn't give it much thought. If you were on the board or in charge of cutting positions, would you give a student with no management experience much credibility?

In a high school I know of, a student turned out to be a nasty criminal, and the school had the grace to say nothing more than, "He isn't coming back this year." I am not saying that Altena is a criminal, but I am saying that maybe as students we need to show our administration some grace, just as they have (possibly) shown Sandi Altena some grace. So maybe a "no comment" answer to my questions will suffice in this case.

Furthermore, I don't think most students can understand the role of administration, simply because we have, on average, no experience with managing a staff of people. But if we do have valuable input, we must think them through and run it by a group of respected elders - perhaps our ideas have been tried before. Above all, we need to use our minds to analyze our idea while including an ounce of grace - our Dordt leaders are not perfect.

And so the most effective time to overhaul Dordt is not now, but after we're a little older and wiser.

But when we are "sitting at the city gates" in 30 or 40 years, we need to remember our idealistic thoughts of our college days and see what the students say then (even the minority protesting nuisance).

If you are still not convinced, and still want to protest the changes around Dordt, then when you are 52 and on the board, or a "valued" alumnus, remember your idealistic mindset of your college days. While some protests now are necessary and good, I think our voice will be more effective when we get *The Voice*.

From a student bored with life

Dear fellow students,

Most of you know me - I'm a pretty normal guy. I attend most of my classes. I'm a "B" student. I go to Dordt dances on occasion. If I'm not too hung over, I attend church on Sunday. If I don't make it to church, I try to go to GIFT or something like that.

The problem is that I am bored. I hate boredom. I would do anything to avoid it. So, I keep seeking new things to amuse me. My girlfriend and I go a little too far every once in a while. I check out porn online, nothing too hardcore. I have started drinking more. I even tried marijuana once. I just don't want to be bored.

Sometimes I think that the problem is with Iowa. There is nothing to do. I bet that the city would be pretty interesting. It must have been boring to live before television and the Internet. I'm not sure that I would ever want to meet anyone from the past. A person would have to be pretty simple in order to survive in a world that was so boring.

Sometimes I think that the problem is with Dutchness. I'm tired of wooden shoes. I'm tired of Kuyper. I'm tired of Dooyeweerd's spheres. These things just aren't interesting.

Sometimes I think that the

problem is with education. I don't enjoy lectures about George III or Descartes or the law of cosines or the frontal lobe of the brain. I'm happy believing what I believe and knowing what I know. I don't need all these useless bits of information when I get out there in the real world.

I dumped my girlfriend a few days ago. Things were getting pretty serious. I didn't want things to get serious. She started talking about having a family and I got scared. I can't imagine living with one person my whole life. Who knows what could happen five years from now? I want to keep my options open. Being married must get boring after a little while.

I visited my grandfather in the hospital yesterday. He is dying of cancer. I wonder what it must be like for him to lie there dying. I remember when he was strong enough to pick me up and run with me on his shoulders. He was a strong man. He must be awfully bored, lying here all day long, remembering the days of his strength. He wants me to sing at his funeral. That should be interesting.

I tried praying yesterday for the first time in a while. I prayed for a few minutes. I waited for an answer. I got bored waiting. Heaven must

be pretty boring. I can't imagine anything worse than spending eternity playing a harp and singing. Creation is boring, and since creation reflects the creator, God must be the most boring thing of all.

When I sit alone in my room, after my roommates are asleep, it is then that I am the most bored. In the silence, I cannot hear anything except my heartbeat. It is at this moment that I wonder whether I am the cause of my own boredom. If I am absolutely alone, then my boredom cannot be coming from something exterior to myself. I try to avoid thinking about this too much. But, in the darkness, these thoughts find me anyway.

I think about death. Would death end this boredom? I'm scared of death. When I wake at the trumpet sound, will I be any less bored or will these thoughts plague me forever? That is the worst feeling: the feeling that I may never escape this boredom, that even in death, this boredom will follow me into eternity. If the new creation looks at all like this old one, it will be nothing short of hell for me to exist there for all time.

Sincerely,
A. William

Christ-like film choices: from *Dinner & Dialogue*

Dr. Daniel F. A. Hitchcock
Guest Writer

We all are familiar with the Sunday School song, "Oh be careful little eyes what you see; oh, be careful little mouth what you say; oh, be careful little feet where you go." My question is: is there any wisdom in that little song for those of us who graduated from preschool long ago?

A picture sure is worth a thousand words, in that pictures influence both attitudes and behavior. If you doubt this conclusion, why are billions of dollars spent per year on advertising if seeing things doesn't influence behavior?

Let me be clear that I am making an argument for discernment and piety—but not a legalistic piety for piety's sake, or in order for any of us to proudly make a claim for self-righteousness. All of us are sinners, and our only claim for righteousness is that which comes from Jesus Christ.

Also, I am not arguing for a total recoiling from our society. No, as Reformed Christians we should not have a world-flight mentality but one of engaging the culture—but being careful to not be transformed by the culture in the process. Even as Christians, who possess the Holy Spirit, we are still weak vessels and prone to sin. The apostle Paul's proverb here

is relevant: bad company corrupts good character (1 Cor. 15:33). So we need to be discerning and careful.

How do we engage our culture responsibly? I believe we can take some guidance from Francis Schaeffer's discussion of "Art and the Bible." He suggests that we apply four standards of judgment in how we as Christians engage in any and all art: technical excellence, truthfulness or validity, the content of the worldview that comes through, and the integration of the content and the vehicle. A balance of these four permits a serious intellectual investigation into art. However, overlooking some or emphasizing one over the others can be irresponsible. For example, praising the technical merits of a film without analyzing its moral content would be irresponsible. Another failure would be making a film that might make an accurate critical moral statement about our culture but uses an immoral vehicle to make its point.

What we need to do is to be set apart from the world. This means to be holy and live a holy, righteous life. We should not engage in the sinful activities the world promotes, nor are we to hold on to the insipid, corrupt mind that the world creates. Rather, we are to seek God to conform us and our minds to

that of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2). This is a daily activity and a daily commitment. We can enjoy the things of the world, but we are not to immerse ourselves in the world. Pleasure is no longer our calling in life, but rather the worship of God.

We need to be careful what media we consume for both a personal reason (to avoid our own fleshly sinful desires) and also for an important communal reason (that we don't cause our brother to stumble into sin). My personal conviction is to know a lot about a film before I see it and to preview anything I allow my children to see. As a man, given my ease in committing the sin of sexual lust and the lust for power, I try to avoid all films with excessive violence or sensual images. This does not mean I avoid talking about or confronting such issues. I see them as exploitation, but I choose not to consume those images as I believe that consuming is a form of participation.

Ultimately, this issue needs to be seen through the eyes of Scripture, so let me conclude a familiar passage from Philippians: "Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

April 3, 2008

Concert Choir: home at last

Grace Venhuizen
Staff Writer

50 members of the Dordt College Concert Choir filed onto the B.J. Haan stage humming one sustained note Friday night, two weeks after they departed for their spring break tour.

Friday's concert was the last performance of the 11-day tour – a way to show the folks at home the musical talent that had been showcased across the East Coast.

Few pieces were quite as moving as Knut Nystedt's "O Crux," a contemporary Norwegian piece whose melodies, even more than words, haunt the listener. The unremitting dissonance of the notes in "O Crux" paralleled through song the unremitting suffering of Christ's death on the cross.

The dark tones within the harmonies were only relieved by higher piercing notes of jubilation when the choir concluded in Latin: "Save the flock which today is gathered to praise you."

The palpable concentration of the singers in their rendition of the Russian folk

song "Pai duli vvihdul ja" was also not easily forgotten by audiences. Not one singer seemed to break eye contact with director Benjamin Kornelis.

The singers' bodies leaned unconsciously forward with the movement of the song's rhythms, which grew faster and faster until finally the song ended in one last "da!" As the audience let out its collectively held breath, one audience member commented, "That was some intense Russian!"

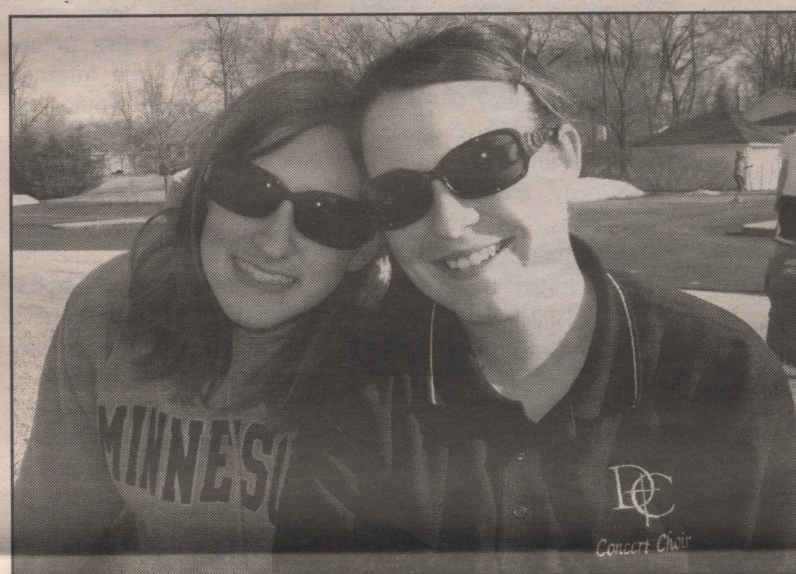
Other favorites, such as "Let Everything That Hath Breath," by Jeffrey L. Ames, and the hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," specially arranged by choir member Brandon Wipf, visibly displayed to Friday's audience the joy that group members felt in singing praise as a choir. Long navy choir robes flowed with the music as faces brightly exhibited their pleasure in singing a brilliant "Hallelujah!"

For an encore, the choir performed a tongue-in-cheek rendition of the infamous "Spider-Pig" song and brought the concert to a fitting close with their trademark arrangement of "Praise to the Lord."



The singers sleep while traveling down the road.

Courtesy of Emily Greenfield



Valerie Kroll and Emily Greenfield take a break from singing to see the sights. During their spring break tour, the choir had a few hours to see Washington, D.C., and a free day in New York City. Unfortunately, it rained while in New York.

Photo courtesy of Emily Greenfield.

Senior engineers put education into practice

Ashlee Stallinga
Staff Writer

For engineering majors like Amanda Arkema, the senior design projects are the "culmination of our engineering education." Five groups of seniors have been working on a variety of projects over the course of the entire school year.

Arkema is working with four other students on an aquaponics system. A combination of aquaculture and hydroponics, the system allows for both plants and fish to grow simultaneously.

Currently, Northwestern College has a similar system functioning in Moldova, a small country near

"Senior design projects are the culmination of our engineering education."

- Amanda Arkema

Ukraine. The system helps feed the people there. Arkema's group is optimizing that system, working on technology that keeps the

water clean and helps fish grow at the desired rate.

When the project is finished, the group will send its results to Northwestern so people there can use the information to improve their system in Moldova.

"Coming into [the project], I was really excited," Arkema said. "I enjoy serving others, so it is combining my major and my passion."

Daryl Visser is working on a project with his group that is helpful a little closer to home.

"It's a distillation column for an on-campus

ethanol production system," Visser said. Simply put, he explains that there is a product pressed from the sorghum called sweet sorghum juice, which is fermented into a beer, or ethanol and water mixture. The column separates the ethanol and water mixture and turns it into usable ethanol.

Once the project is finished, it will be used for ethanol research, to determine if it is economically feasible to have a small system on a farm.

Another group is working on the same produc-

tion system, focusing on the fermentation process.

"I was looking forward to the design process," Visser said. "It was nice to do an actual application, rather than just theoretical designs."

The designing process is finished, the pieces for the project have been ordered, and many have arrived. "We basically have to construct it now," Visser said.

The construction will have to be finished by May 7, when all five of the projects will be featured in a presentation in S101.

Prairie/wetland project awarded \$20,000 in state funds for native seeds

Luke Schut
Staff Writer

A grant from the Iowa Department of Transportation will allow the seeding at Dordt's new prairie and wetland to begin this summer.

"They awarded us \$1000 an acre for seed," said Robert De Haan, associate professor of Environmental Studies and member of the ad hoc committee in charge of the prairie project. "Sometime in May or June

we intend to plant much of the prairie."

De Haan said the grant will cover approximately 80 percent of the estimated \$1200-per-acre seed cost.

The new prairie will be on 20 acres of land south of Dordt's campus and will replace a quarter-acre prairie patch that was paved over when the Campus Center was constructed.

Six of the 20 acres will be devoted to a wetland. This will be a habitat for wildlife and will also serve

as a retention pond to prevent campus runoff from flooding land further downstream.

After this summer's seeding, De Haan said, regular mowing will keep the prairie grasses between six and 18 inches for the first two years in order to allow the shorter plants to receive more sun and grow more quickly. The area will then likely be allowed to flower, giving it the appearance of a true prairie.

"It will look like a hayfield

for the first two years," said De Haan.

De Haan also hopes that the prairie will attract certain

The new prairie will be on 20 acres of land south of Dordt's campus.

species of mammals, insects and birds. Trees are being removed from the area to stop hawks from perching in them and scaring away some bird species.

The prairie will be used by Dordt classes such as ecology and botany and will facilitate students' research projects. It will also be made available to local schools and the community.

A bike trail will also run through the 20 acres. The trail, a cooperative effort between Dordt and the city of Sioux Center, will start near the Harry and Gert Kuhl farm and will end at the soccer field.

Dordt Dances at Doc's: a review of weekend parties

Micah Schuurman
Staff Writer

The beat pulsed through every bone in my body. I found myself in a sea of men and women dancing the night away. I had taken my first step into the world of Dordt Dances.

Dordt Dances are put on by Musical Edge DJ Services (www.iowadj.com), a company owned and operated by two Business Administration majors here at Dordt: Jeff (Kor) Meuzelaar and Jesse Veenstra, both from Pella, Iowa.

Jeff founded Musical Edge in 2001 and began to DJ parties at the age of 16. When he came to Dordt in 2004, he began to get involved with the dances by providing lighting. Over time, the duties of setting up the dances fell into his lap.

Over the years, Jeff has established a name for himself and his company. Jesse joined the company earlier last year as a DJ and an owner. The company is currently training other DJs as well to broaden their ability to handle the demands of the market.

Operating a DJ company is a lucrative business, one that Jeff and Jesse plan to continue working in after graduation. At these Dordt Dances, there is a five-dollar admission charge and attendance ranges from 300 to 600 dancers (roughly half of the attendees are Dordt

students). Yet, Jeff stated that only 15 percent of the company's revenue comes from Dordt Dances. Most of their revenue comes from wedding receptions, school dances, private parties and corporate events. In fact, they have 60 events booked through 2009 with more expected, mostly weddings.

However, neither sees this venture as a career. They plan on working as DJs for a few more years in Des Moines before moving on to other things.

Musical Edge is merely a stepping stone, giving them real life experience as proprietors of a company, filing taxes, doing customer

service, etc. "It also helps pay the bills," Jesse said with a grin.

I asked them how their business fit in with Kuyper's language about square inches. They both affirmed that Christ is Lord of all creation, including parties. After a look at the Bible, one sees that David danced naked in the streets, and Christ's first miracle was turning water into wine.

But Jeff replied, "(The dances) are not distinctly Christian; we are setting an environment where we (Jesse and I) aren't doing anything wrong.

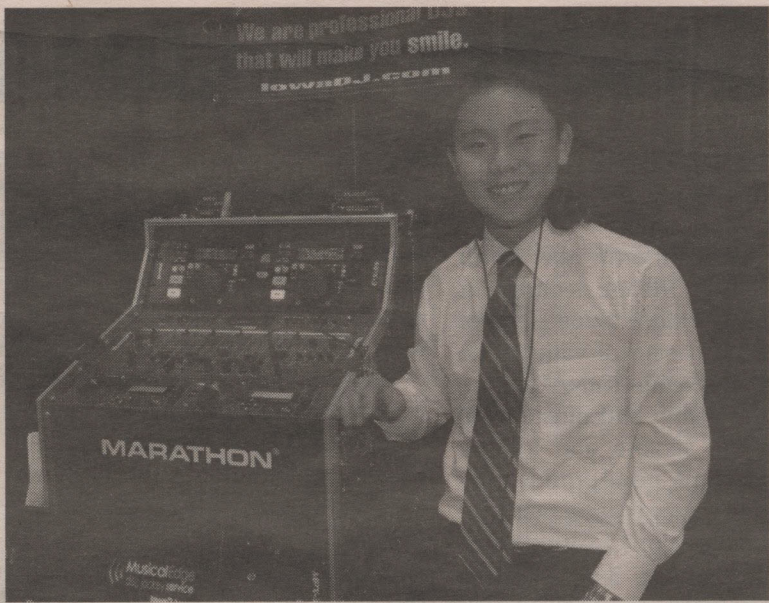
How people choose to conduct themselves is up to them." Jesse said, "There are people at the dances who are crossing the line, but that happens with any sort of business."

In other words, customers misuse the services of businesses of all types. It is not the responsibility of the business to ensure that the consumer enjoys the service responsibly. Jesse made the further point that people would dress the same and act the same whether the titles of the dances were "GI Joes and Barbie Hos" or merely "GI Joes and Barbies."

Many of the professors are uneasy with the partying scene at Dordt. While Dordt Dances are in no way officially

connected to Dordt, these people feel that the parties reflect negatively upon the college.

One professor said, "I don't think that it is evil; I just think that it is stupid. No one leaves college wishing that they had partied more." Responsibility lies in many places. According to professors who think this way, Musical Edge does not provide services



Jeff Meuzelaar, DJ and owner of Musical Edge DJ Services, runs the equipment for Dordt Dances, among other events. Photo courtesy of Meuzelaar.

that are neutral. They provide a place where lewd behavior is overlooked and ignored, if not altogether encouraged.

It may be possible to attend a Dordt Dance and have fun while behaving morally. I certainly did my best to do so. But it is certain that a significant portion of the attendees do not behave morally at the dances.

Are Dordt Dances neutral? Jeff and Jesse believe that they are, saying the individuals on the floor are responsible for their indecent behavior.

There are two things that I learned from my venture into the room at the back of Doc's. The first is that Dordt has failed its students. The fun - yes, fun - and the energy present at a Dordt Dance cannot be found anywhere else on campus. Parties are an aspect of God's creation. We, as an institution, are terrible at partying. We have left parties as an uncultivated part of God's creation.

My freshman year, Dordt hosted a dance with alcohol and everything else - plus accountability. And students liked it. The

reason that there have not been other such dances is that the constituents, those who make donations, strongly disapproved.

Both Jeff and Jesse admit that their dances are not distinctly Christian. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a way in which they could throw a distinctly Christian party, given their resources. Shouldn't there be a place for Christian partying and shouldn't Dordt be involved in creating that place?

The second thing I learned is that Dordt Dances which take place at Doc's do have some positive qualities in terms of safety. If they did not take place at Doc's, students would go to a barn or to a field where there are no security or police to provide a safe environment.

Doc's is a lot safer than just any old place. There is a bouncer walking the floor throughout the night, attempting to ensure that all of those who are drinking are of age.

After my brief stint in the world of Dordt Dances, I have decided to leave the partying to the partiers. It never was my kind of thing anyway.

We, as an institution, are terrible at partying. We have left parties as an uncultivated part of God's creation.

Dordt to get a campus-wide facelift by 2009

Jamin Hubner
Staff Writer

Construction plans are underway for Dordt's campus that will begin as early as this May.

Arlan Nederhoff, the Vice President of Business Affairs, detailed these plans in a recent interview with the Diamond. The plans, first approved in 2004, include changes to the classroom building, the science building, East Campus apartments and the Commons.

While the schedule remains somewhat tentative, the majority of the following plans should be com-

pleted within a span of about three to four years in the future.

The earliest changes will take place in the classroom building, beginning in May and being completed in the fall of 2009. The plans will mostly affect the Art and Education departments.

The Education pods, now located on the second story, will enjoy a new home above the current entrance and north/south hallway in a brand new second floor. Several of the classrooms currently on the second floor will be also modified for more appropriate class sizes.

Additionally, C160 will feature a partitioning wall. Jim Bos, the registrar, had revealed that there is a greater need for 40-60 person classrooms than large lecture halls. A partitioning wall will effectively allow the room to be split in half for smaller classes and opened up for larger ones.

The Art Department will gain a painting, sculpture and print-making room in a new addition on the southwest side of the classroom building (south of the art gallery).

About a year after the Art Department project begins, the construction of a new wing on the science

building will take place. This addition will house new chemistry and biology labs. The old labs will be refitted for classroom use or other needs there may be.

At the same time, the Commons will undergo remodeling, and the East Campus apartments will



A skid loader levels the ground for improvement. Photo courtesy of DENIS.

most likely be replaced in chunks beginning in fall of 2008. If all goes well, by 2009 all of East Campus will be replaced with new housing units similar to Southview.

April 3, 2008

Seniors refine their theatrical style

Nathan Smith
Editor

This month the Dordt College Theatre department will produce three plays of wide theatrical variety. The three "senior shows" feature the acting and directing of three seniors, and for the first time are all produced by one senior theatre management major, T.J. Lagestee.

On Apr. 3-5, Jonathon Shaffstall will perform Becky Mode's one-man comedy "Fully Committed." The play is unusual and challenging, as Shaffstall will be playing nearly 40 characters.

The main character of the play, Sam, works in the basement of an upscale French restaurant in New York. Shaffstall also plays the numerous characters that phone into the restaurant to make reservations, such as the old Mrs. Vanderveer, whose quivering voice Shaffstall easily slid into during our interview.

The large number of characters is an acting challenge that requires great flexibility but is a challenge Shaffstall enjoys. "I want people to be entertained," he said, "but I hope they realize how difficult it is."

Fellow theatre major Justine Moelker, who is giving a show of her own, said that in light of the heaviness of this year's theatre productions, a comedy like Shaffstall's "is almost needed."

Moelker's show, David Auburn's "Proof," will showcase on Apr. 16, 17 and 19. In her show, she plays the lead

of Catherine who is coping with the death of her mathematician father who had slowly gone insane and died. Three other actors and actresses play supporting roles as family and friends.

Moelker said the task of both acting and directing is complex. "There's so much more to think about," said Moelker, "but I feel prepared to do it."

Shaffstall, who has read the script for "Proof," said he thinks that Moelker and company will be able to do a wonderful job of acting the multi-dimensional play, and that "the play itself is so well written."

Moelker said that these productions allow her and the other seniors to "find their style, and work on it" – an important process to do at the end of an undergraduate career.

Melissa Schans will give the final senior show of the year on Apr. 24-26. The play, which she has entitled "The Women of Greece," is her composition of scenes from four Greek plays: "Antigone," "Lysistrata," "Iphigenia" and "Medea."

Schans worked on cutting and compiling these scenes over the past summer and part of the school year after being inspired by the impressive "Medea," which she felt was too long to perform in entirety. Instead she decided to use fragments from four Greek plays to emphasize different strengths of women.

Her show also emphasizes drawing the audience

into Greek culture and even includes original music composed for her production by Hollywood composers who wrote music for the films "Troy" and "300."

She said she wants the audience to feel like they're "coming into a new world" when they enter the coincidentally named New World Theatre. Schans' play includes violence and sexual language that may make some uncomfortable, and those under 12 will not be admitted.

Schans also had to deal with several directing difficulties. "It's challenging to have to watch actors and be taking care of myself at the same time," she said, and also related the difficulties of having to replace actors who dropped out of participation in her production.

Each of the three plays is produced by Lagestee. His "triple-play" producing role is atypical for the department, but is not surprising because he is the first theatre management major to come out of the theatre department.

Producing a play entails mainly funding the play and securing the rights to perform it publicly. In the "real world," his tasks are usually accomplished by many different people.



Senior theatre major Justine Moelker does behind-the-scenes work on her upcoming play, "Proof." Photo by Becky Love

Lageestee spends a lot of his time coordinating the groups of people that make the productions possible, and he will be the person selling you a ticket at the theatre door.

"I enjoy being behind the scenes," said Lageestee. "I like organizing and making sure that all elements of the shows come together and that people are keeping on task," he added.

Like the three seniors directing the plays, he finds producing the plays to be hectic, especially keeping the elements of the shows separate from each other. But he said he has learned to "keep things relatively straight."

Lageestee said he feels confident that the three directors could have pulled off their plays without him, but he feels he "made the whole process a little easier for them."

All four seniors said that community members should come to see the shows because they and the other participants have put tremendous work and effort into the productions.

The Theatre Arts program does not require seniors to stage these shows, and all four seniors feel quite strongly about the amount of work they have been doing. "The three shows will be done well, and they're so different," said Shaffstall.

On the difference and importance of the plays, all four agreed. "Every story has something to say about being human," said Lageestee. "If there was ever a time to enjoy a variety of theatre in a short time, this is the opportunity."

The shows all begin at 7:30 p.m. in the New World Theatre on their respective nights.

Choir festival boasts 12 choirs, Russian lyrics

Bree Wierenga
Staff Writer

On Friday, April 11, Dordt's Music Department, led by Dr. Benjamin Kornelis, will host the High School Choral Festival in the B.J. Haan Auditorium and the De Witt Gymnasium. The Festival, held every even

spring semester, gathers all the Dordt choirs along with many nearby Christian high school choirs to perform on an individual and cooperative basis. The Festival runs all day, with choir performances starting at 7 p.m.

Since 1996, Kornelis has headed the Festival by choosing the repertoire

and organizing the events of the day. "There are lots of really positive things about the Festival," Kornelis said. For example, he works with each high school choir individually during the day to make them feel more confident about their performance. He also prepares all the choirs (including

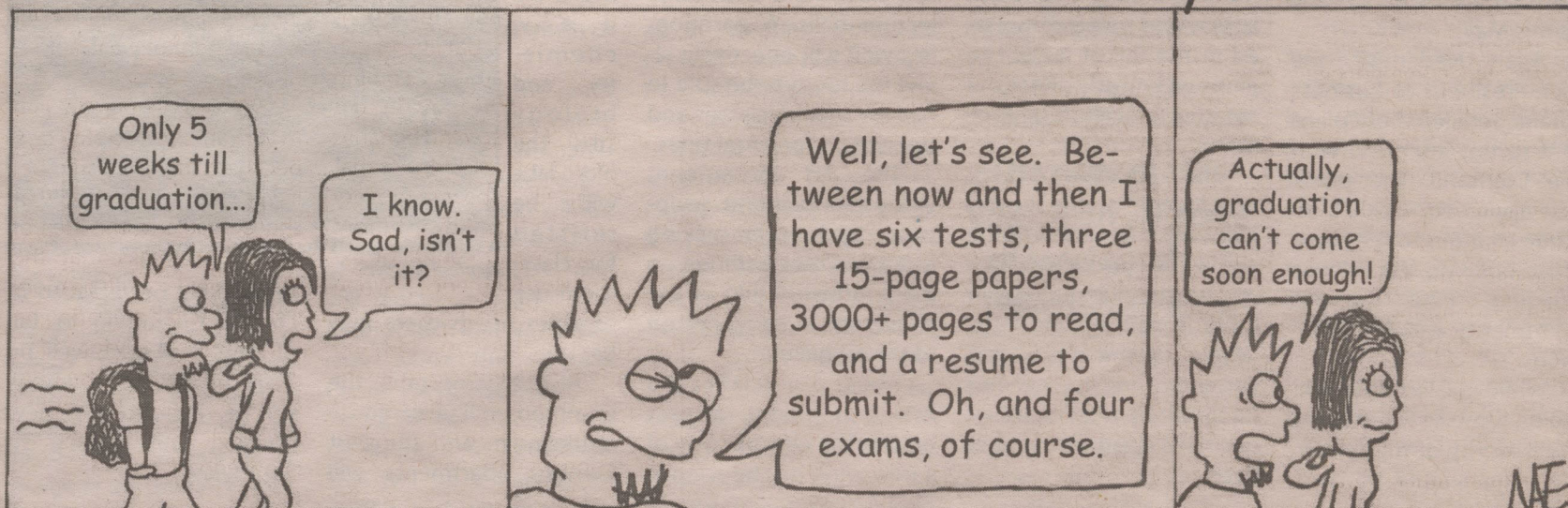
Dordt's) to sing a few selections together at the end of the day in the De Witt Gym. "Experiencing the massed choir is musically overwhelming," he said.

This year boasts eight participating high school choirs along with Dordt's four choirs. Some of the repertoire for the massed

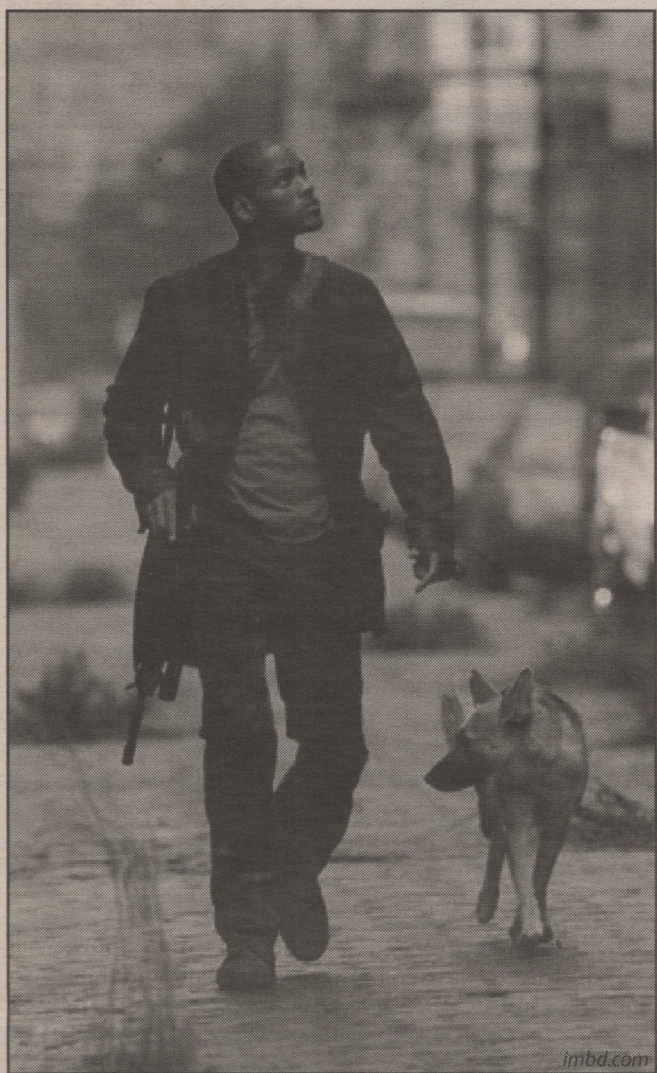
choir will include "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and the Russian folk song "Pai duli vvihdul ja."

Audiences have something exciting to look forward to: "Listening to 700-plus people trying to sing Russian really fast," said Kornelis. "I don't know what I was thinking."

Cartoon by Nate Gibson



Will Smith vs. the zombies: "I Am Legend" comes to DVD



Joel Veldkamp
Staff Writer

For those who missed it in theaters, the recent DVD release of "I Am Legend" gives movie-watchers the chance to check out a powerful entry to the zombie/sci-fi/end-of-the-world genre. Directed by Francis Lawrence, "I Am Legend" set a record-breaking box office debut last December, and for good reason. In terms of acting, cinematography and suspense, this thriller does not disappoint.

"I Am Legend" is the third film adaptation of a 1954 novel by Richard Matheson. Will Smith stars as Dr. Robert Neville, the lone human resident of Manhattan Island in the year 2012.

By day, he roams the abandoned streets of New York with his dog Sam, hunting deer, growing crops and scavenging supplies from empty houses.

At night, he turns out the lights and shuts up his house, because at night, the

zombies come out.

In a series of very effective (and scary) flashbacks, we learn that the majority of the human race has been turned into light-phobic zombies by a plague that started out as a cure for cancer. Neville was the head of the military's effort to find a cure for the plague. He was also one of the few human beings with a natural immunity. For three years, he has lived alone, still trying to find the cure.

In almost every way, "I Am Legend" is fantastic. For the majority of the film, Will Smith is the only actor on the screen, and he handles the role magnificently. The sweeping shots of a desolate New York City are breathtaking, and the first two acts of the film deliver plenty of pulse-pounding moments.

"I Am Legend" has all the makings of a sci-fi epic. But it's not quite perfect. Two things hold it back: poor CGI and the ending.

Ideally, movie zombies

are supposed to create feelings of terror. The entirely computer-generated zombies of "I Am Legend" do not. They're effective in quick, blurred, jumpy scenes, but several of the film's most important moments require Will Smith to get up close and personal with the zombies, and they simply do not impress.

As for the ending, it's not that it doesn't make sense. It just doesn't match the buildup. The final act feels thrown-on. In short, it tries to be M. Night Shyamalan's "Signs" – and doesn't quite succeed. (The two-disc DVD release contains an alternate ending which is actually a moderate improvement on the theatrical ending.)

Still, for anyone remotely interested in the genre, this is a film to see. Its flaws are far outweighed by its triumphs, and it will bore no one. "I Am Legend" doesn't have to be perfect to get its viewers to cheer on Will Smith in the timeless battle against the undead.

Vegetarians? Maybe not so scary after all

Alvin Shim
Staff Writer

Kim Deelstra has deep, brown eyes, similarly brown hair and moves about in a collected, delicate way, as if she were the type of person that knits or bakes in her spare time (she does both). She'll graduate this spring with a degree in Chemistry and a minor in Missions & Evangelism because someday, hopefully, she'll move to Africa as a physician and treat HIV/AIDS patients.

She first went to Africa in the summer of 2006 to work with Africa Inland Missions (AIM) in Namibia, and that is

the last time she intentionally ate meat – Oryx, a wild antelope that often uses its horns to kill lions and is a popular game trophy, adorning the walls of distinguished hunters, clad in khaki, all over the world.

Kim is a vegetarian. I thought she was strange for that.

I sat down with Kim a few nights ago to discuss how meat can taste so good but can seem so horrible, where fruits like mangos and bananas come from, and why anybody would order a dish called Chicken and Broccoli and then ask to hold the broccoli.

We also discussed every-

thing she ate that day – granola for breakfast that she made with dates, flax seeds, sunflower seeds and walnuts; a veggie burrito with brown rice and garbanzo beans for lunch; for dinner, because her fiancé (Kris Walhof) wasn't around, she settled for a cheesy omelet (two egg whites, one yolk) with toast. No meat, but also not the diet for a strict vegan. Also note the lack of pills or other supplements, protein, calcium or otherwise.

During the first semester of her sophomore year, Kim worked at a local restaurant where she observed the proper and legal handling of enormous piles of meat:

mountains of raw chicken and piles of bloody beef that Sioux Center would plow through with every meal. It wasn't just that she would clear plates with entire vegetable portions untouched, but that no plate would be clean and the rest of the meal (precious meat, stinky vegetables and all) would go to the trash while more boxes of animal carcass were prepared for the next rush.

At this point in the story, Kim crinkled her nose and said, "It changes your mentality, you know?" She stopped eating meat there and started thinking more about food – what it is and where it comes from – shortly afterwards.

"The other day I really wanted some nectarines at the store, but it's March and where are they coming from? Chile! So I couldn't get them." Mangos and bananas are both tropical fruits that magically appear in grocery stores in the Midwest (from almost every continent except North America.) "When you start thinking about the fossil fuels it costs to bring them here and try to imagine the laborers that picked them to be sent here, I mean, it's not very stewardly."

I had thought we would spend the night throwing

speculations about the meat industry around – what free-range or organically raised actually means – but, instead, we contemplated food consciousness in general. The fruits sprayed with preservatives and shipped from South Asia, the microwave popcorn that trial vegetarians would eat for an entire week and efforts to be conscious about what we eat.

Kim is a vegetarian, but she "doesn't want everybody to become a vegetarian." She isn't a vegetarian because she feels guilt for killing the animals (she makes chicken for Kris and he has to eat it) or because it's somehow more convenient (she stresses out because she doesn't want to inconvenience friends or hosts when they eat out together).

She is a vegetarian, and makes an effort to stay one, because she honestly believes it is better. Not that she is hostile to the idea of meat, but thinks that the idea of meat should be more like "a butcher preparing an animal specifically for a family," so the steak doesn't become an item to be bought like a pair of jeans, but is acknowledged as food.

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April 3, 2008

Coaches at work: the art of recruiting

Amanda Henke
Cheryl Hiemstra
Staff Writers

Head Coach John Heavner explained that this year would be the hardest for football recruits. Despite a few players who left, he said, "It was better than I expected. We only lost one player during the season. That's unheard of." Heavner mentioned it was too early to judge retention of the football program: "In five years if we have retention, we'll have a good football program."

He added that a factor in retention involves everyone in the community. However, there are many factors that are out of a community's control and out of the football program's control.

Finding recruits that fit Dordt's criteria is quite a challenge, said Heavner. "I get 10-15 e-mail requests for more information about the program per day," Heavner said. He first looks on their application to see if they have a church affiliation and then what their academics look like.

Junior wide receiver Ryan Campbell of Fort Worth, TX, helps out with the recruiting process. He said that what attracts players to Dordt is that they have a chance to "build a legacy." He added, "We're here to leave them a team with the reputation of being the little dog that fights."

He mentioned that northwest Iowa views on football differ from the South. "When I was in elementary school we got an inch of snow on the ground. The principal cancelled school and told us to go outside and play football." He added, "We would

play in front of 60,000 folks at our State games."

But for area Christian high schools like Unity and Western Christian, State means nets, a hardwood floor and tennis shoes. Around here, fans at the State tournament are watching bumps, sets and spikes in the fall. And after Christmas, they are back to watch assists, lay-ups, jump shots. Area Christian school athletes haven't been trained to think football because, until recently, they didn't even have a team.

For Dordt volleyball and basketball teams, the idea of building a legacy started over 50 years ago.

With the football program in its first year, Heavner doesn't have the luxury of having the number of experienced recruits in the area like basketball and volleyball coaches Tom Van Den Bosch and Greg Van Soelen.

However, both point out they never assume someone is coming, whether a recruit lives 10 miles or over 10 hours away. "You try to say what you can as many times as you can," said Van Soelen, "but in the end it's in the players hands. It's their decision."

One of their biggest focuses is getting recruits on campus. "A normal recruit day is similar to a regular visit day," says Van Soelen. After seeing the campus, potential players meet with the coaches and may watch or join in on a practice with the team. Each year, both volleyball and basketball look to add about 10-12 freshmen, though many more are usually interested.

Tuition costs factor into the decision, and both Van Den Bosch and Van Soel-



Kari Van Beek, a senior at Western Christian High School, is officially recruited for track and volleyball by Tom Van Den Bosch. Photo courtesy of DENIS.

en admit it is hard sometimes to convince young athletes who could get bigger scholarship packages from bigger schools to come play for Dordt.

Regardless of the challenges and time commitment, the coaches agree that recruiting is enjoyable. "You get to meet a lot of interesting kids and their families," said Van Den Bosch. And fortunately for all coaches, a majority of those kids come. They walk to the classroom building, eat at the commons, go to practice and, on game night, put on their Dordt jersey.

And when it comes to taking the jersey off for the last time, most Dordt athletes have gained more than playing time here; they've received a solid Christian education, just like they were told when they were a fresh recruit.

Blades finish 13 out of 32 in the national tournament

Jesse Veenstra
Staff Writer

Some will say that the Dordt Blades' motto of "Living the Dream" of going to Nationals became a reality this season. After cruising through the qualification process, the Blades entered the ACHA Division III national tournament over spring break with a lot of confidence.

The Blades drew Central Florida in the first round on March 12. After a slow start, Dordt came charging back to tie the score at 3-3 before heading into overtime and a shootout. Unfortunately the Blades fell by two goals in the intense shootout to drop their opening game in the tournament.

"I think we proved we belong"
- Coach Nate van Niejenhuis

Dordt had to try to bounce back in their second game against Saginaw Valley State, who had also lost their first-round game. Dordt jumped out to an early lead, but Saginaw put up four straight goals to take a commanding 4-1 lead in the game and rolled to a 6-2 victory over the Blades.

Dordt bounced back on March 14 with a hard-

fought 5-4 victory over Fairfield University. The Blades were able to withstand an onslaught of shots late to secure the first-ever national tournament win for the program.

In Dordt's final game, and fourth in four days, Dordt faced off against Florida Gulf Coast. The Blades secured a 4-2 victory, and finished the tournament in 13th place (out of 32).

The final two games of the year showed the extent of Dordt's ability and desire.

Blades coach Nate van Niejenhuis said, "To bounce back after losing to a team in the first round on a shootout that made the semifinals and then go 2-2 for the week in our first trip here—I think we proved we belong."

Junior Jared Rempel claimed first-team All American honors, as well as first-team All-Pacific region and academic All-American honors. Sophomore Todd Bakker received second-team All-Pacific region honors, as he led the team with 46 goals. Bakker led the ACHA Division III in scoring and ranked second in goals and seventh in assists with 42.

The Blades finished the season with a 24-9 record and a 2-2 record in the national tournament.

Dordt Sport Report: Jeanetta Gronendyk

Year: Senior

Hometown: Downs, Kansas

Major: Psychology

Events: Hurdles, 200-meter dash and 4x1 relay

Who has been one of your athletic role models?

Steve Prefontaine, of course. What runner doesn't idolize him?

Does the track team have any unique traditions?

We like to slow clap a lot.

Pre-game meal?

My pre-game meal usually consists of spaghetti and garlic bread, and ever since junior high my parents always brought me strawberries, red licorice and trail mix to eat between events. It's a tradition that I still keep.



Jeanetta Gronendyk
Track

"Coach Heynen dance[d] to Flo-Rider's 'Low' and then Soulja Boy ... he tried to do the worm, but it didn't work."

What are some personal goals you have for the remainder of the season?

I want to [get a] personal record in the 100-meter hurdles – I'm shooting for a 15.4. I think it's definitely within reach.

What are your plans post-graduation?

I plan on going to the University of Iowa for my master's in social work.

What has been one of your greatest memories in your four years on the track team?

Actually, today's practice just made a top memory. I watched Coach Heynen dance to Flo-Rider's "Low" and then Soulja Boy. And then he tried to do the worm, and it didn't work. It was awesome!

-Compiled by Alanna Dake

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